

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the notification of allowable subject matter, i.e. that claims 4, 9 and 13-14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1, 7, and 11 have been amended, claims 2, 9 and 15-18 have been cancelled without prejudice, and claims 19-26 have been added. No new matter has been added by virtue of the amendments and new claims. For instance, support for the amendments and new claims appears e.g. at pages 4 and 5.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Hioki (U.S. 2002/0187421).

Claims 1, 2 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Trefonas (U.S. Patent 5350714).

Claims 1, 2, 7, 11 and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Adams (U.S. Patent 6410209).

Claims 1-3 and 7-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Feiring (U.S. Patent 6790587).

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Bretia (U.S. Patent 5492793).

Claims 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Thackeray (U.S. Patent 5851730).

Claims 5 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Hioki or Adams and further in view of Chen (U.S. Patent 6586560).

For the sake of brevity, the several rejections are addressed in combination.

While Applicants disagree with the rejections, it is also believed the rejections are obviated by the amendments made herein. In particular, the pending independent claims recite subject matter indicated to be allowable.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Corless', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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